

Petition for Chapter 54 Standby or Successor Guardian

If there already is a court appointed guardian and you want to become the Standby or Successor Guardian of that minor, then **YOU MUST** complete the following forms. Always PRINT the required information in the blanks. Always use black ink, never use pencil.

1. **Form GN-3435** - Petition for Appointment of Standby or Successor Guardian
2. **Form GF-150** - Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act Affidavit
3. **Form GN-3140** – Statement of Acts by Proposed Guardian and Consent to Serve as Guardian
4. **Form 1877-1 R2** - Minor Guardianship Questionnaire (NOTE: page 2-5 is information about you, the Proposed Successor/Standby Guardian, the person who is proposing to care for the child)

PLEASE NOTE: If you are planning to co-petition, both petitioners need to either attend the review or have the documents notarized prior to the review. Also, each petitioner must complete a separate Form GN-3140 – Statement of Acts by Proposed Guardian and Consent to Serve as Guardian

Pro se litigants: When **ALL** of the forms are completed, **YOU MUST CALL 414-257-5422** to schedule to have the Staff Attorney review your paperwork and determine if it is legally sufficient.

The things you will need to bring when you file the Petition are:

1. A valid driver's license or valid State ID.
2. All the forms listed above, completed.
3. Current Addresses for:
 - a. Mother
 - b. Father of the Child
 - c. Child
 - d. Current guardian, if one has been appointed previously by the court
4. **\$15.00 processing fee per child/petition filed** [cash (exact amount), check or money order are the only accepted payment methods]

<p>The Court <u>will be cross-checking</u> the names and addresses provided for each party to ensure that proper notice is provided to all who are entitled to notice of the proceedings.</p>

PLEASE NOTE: This Packet is designed to help pro se litigants with juvenile guardianship procedures. While the information contained in this Packet is about legal issues, it is **not legal advice**, nor is it a substitute for legal advice from an attorney. If you choose **not** to hire an attorney, you will be representing yourself in court. It is always better to have an attorney help you if you have questions during your case. When using these forms, you are acting as your own lawyer and you have to do everything a lawyer would do: fill out the forms, file the forms with the Clerk of Courts, have a court date scheduled, arrange for service on the other persons, gather all necessary information, appear at the hearing and present any evidence.

Follow the sample that is provided with this Packet. Wisconsin law requires that the minor child (the proposed ward) for whom you are petitioning either be a resident of Milwaukee County or be present in Milwaukee County. See sec. 54.30(2), Wis. Stats.

DO NOT sign the documents that need to be notarized (Petition for Appointment of Standby or Successor Guardian, Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act Affidavit and Statement of Acts by Proposed Guardian and Consent to Serve as Guardian). The Clerk of Circuit Court staff will notarize your signature at the time of filing once they see your ID.

The Review

1. On your scheduled review date bring all the items listed 1-4 on Page 1.
2. Report to **Room 1630** to meet with the Staff Attorney:
Vel R. Philips Juvenile Justice Center
10201 West Watertown Plank Road [between Hwy 100 (Mayfair Road) and Hwy 45]
Wauwatosa, WI 53226
3. If the Staff Attorney determines your petition is legally sufficient, you will file your completed Petition with the Clerk of Courts office and you will receive a court date, typically in about 30 days.
4. State law requires that a Guardian ad Litem (an attorney) be appointed to represent the best interest of the child. The Guardian ad Litem **is not** your attorney.
5. After you file the Petition, the Clerk of Courts office staff will give you the printed Order and Notice of Hearing, along with written instructions about Personal Service.

Personal Service

1. Personal Service means getting the Order and Notice of Hearing and Petition into the other person's hand in a legally defined way to notify him or her of the court hearing.
2. You cannot be the process server.
3. You are responsible for finding someone (the server) to hand the documents to the person needing service.
4. The server must be over the age of 18, a resident of Wisconsin and they cannot be a party to the action.
5. The server must personally hand a copy of the Order and Notice of Hearing and the Petition to the person being served. The server should then fill out the "Affidavit of Service" and have their signature notarized.
6. If, after diligently looking for a person, you are unable to serve them in person, then you must send the Order and Notice of Hearing and Petition by certified mail with return receipt requested or registered mail to their last known address at least 10 days prior to the hearing. Bring proof of mailing to the first court hearing.
7. Personal Service **MUST** be done within **10 DAYS** prior to the hearing.
8. If all of the interested parties are not properly notified, your case could be dismissed.
9. Persons that must be served:
 - a. Child, if over 14 years of age
 - b. Parents
 - c. Any person that currently has legal or physical custody of the child
 - d. The Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Service - if they are involved with the child
 - e. Anyone who has had custody of the child in the previous 60 days
 - f. Anyone who has been nominated to serve as the child's guardian through a will.
10. You must have the written "Affidavit(s) of Service" when you come to court. This will prove to the court that all parties were notified of the court hearing (time and place).

Attend the Hearing

On the date of your hearing bring along your copy of the Petition, Order and Notice of Hearing and the Affidavit(s) of Service. In addition, if applicable, please bring:

1. Any Waiver and Consent to Petition for Guardianship of Minor by the parent (Form GN-3310); or
2. Any Certificate of Death of a parent or current Guardian.

If an emergency comes up and you cannot make it to court on time, call the court and the Guardian ad Litem ahead of time to explain the circumstances. If you are late or fail to appear in court, the Judge may dismiss your case. The Judge will decide whether or not to grant your Petition.